

REMARKS

This Response supplements the Response to Office Action filed April 12, 2005, and amends the claims in order to further emphasize patentable features of Applicants' invention. Claims 1 and 15 were amended in the Response filed April 12, 2005. Comments and remarks set forth in the Response filed April 12, 2005 are incorporated herein by reference.

Claims 1-22 are pending in the present application. The claims have been amended by adding independent Claim 22 thereto. Claim 22 is a method claim that recites respective features of Claim 1, and adds to such recitation the subject matter of Claims 6 and 7. Claim 22 further recites the feature of automatically granting permission to exceed the print quota, when printer use is comparatively low during the specified time period, even if such permission has not been requested. This feature is clearly supported by Applicants' specification, such as at page 11, lines 15-23, which reads as follows:

Special permission to exceed print quotas can also be automated and based on the total network printer use for that time interval, so that network administrators are not constantly bogged down with requests from users. In addition, special permission can be granted preemptively if a user is about to exceed his or her quota and network printer use is low for that time interval. In this way, the delay of having to process a formal request can be avoided.

I. 35 U.S.C. § 103, Obviousness

The Examiner has rejected claims 1-21 under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,714,971, to Motoyama et al, in combination with U.S. Patent No. 6,240,460, to Mitsutake et al. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

II. Response to Rejection of Claims

A. Claims 1-21 are considered to distinguish over the cited art for all the reasons set forth in the Remarks section of Applicants' Response filed April 12, 2005. As stated above, all comments and remarks of such Response are incorporated herein by reference.

B. Added Claim 22 is considered to distinguish over the cited art in reciting the step of "setting a predetermined quota for the number of pages a network user is allowed to print within a specified time period", in the over-all combination of Claim 22. Applicants consider this feature to be patentably distinguishing for reasons set forth in their Response filed April 12, 2005, particularly at pages 6-10.

C. Added Claim 22 is considered to further distinguish over the cited art in reciting the step of "automatically granting special permission to a user to exceed said predetermined print quota, when printer use in said computer network is comparatively low during said specified time period, said permission being automatically granted either in the absence of a request for said permission or after receiving a request therefor." This recitation includes the subject matter of Claim 7, that is, "the process of granting permission to exceed the print quota is automated." In rejecting Claim 7 in the Office Action of January 12, 2005, the Examiner stated the following:

Regarding claim 7, 14, and 21 Motoyama et al disclose: The method according to claim 6, wherein the process of granting permission to exceed the print quota is automated (please note column 14 lines 50-55).

Office Action dated January 15, 2002, page 4.

The Motoyama reference, at the cited col. 14, lines 50-55, reads as follows:

as example, warning messages may be sent when the user reaches 90% of a predetermined limit amount of usage, when the user reaches 95%, 99%, and when the user reaches his/her predetermined limit amount. If a user exceeds predetermined limits, the user may, for example, be permitted to complete the current job and then be prohibited from any further resource usage, or the user may be allowed to request a new, higher limit.

Applicants have carefully reviewed the above excerpt from Motoyama et al. However, such excerpt provides no teaching or suggestion of automatically granting

permission to exceed a predetermined print quota, as recited by Applicants' Claim 7. Moreover, the above excerpt clearly fails to show or suggest the Claim 22 feature of automatically granting permission to exceed the print quota, when printer use is comparatively low during the specified time period, and regardless of whether or not permission to exceed the print quota was requested. Accordingly, this feature, as recited in the over-all combination of Claim 22, is considered to distinguish Claim 22 over the Motoyama et al reference.

Applicants have considered the teachings of Mitsutake et al. However, none of such teachings, either alone or in any combination with Motoyama, are considered to overcome the deficiencies of Motoyama, as discussed above in regard to added Claim 22. Accordingly, the recitation of Claim 22 is considered to patentably distinguish over any combination of such references.

III. Conclusion

It is respectfully urged that the subject application is patentable over Motoyama et al., Mitsutake and any combination thereof, and is now in condition for allowance.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request consideration and allowance of the currently pending claims.

The Examiner is invited to call the undersigned at the below-listed telephone number if in the opinion of the examiner such a telephone conference would expedite or aid the prosecution and examination of this application.

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Respectfully submitted,

James O. Skarsten
Reg. No. 28,346
Yee & Associates, P.C.
P.O. Box 802333
Dallas, TX 75380
(972) 385-8777
Attorney for Applicants